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THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 23 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement by the Presidency of the European Union on Burundi, issued on 20 May 1997 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of
the Netherlands to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: French]

Statement by the Presidency of the European Union on Burundi, issued on 20 May 1997

The European Union notes with satisfaction the announcement on 13 May by President Pierre Buyoya of the negotiations that are under way in Rome in order to bring about a ceasefire in Burundi and also of the forthcoming start of the political negotiations under the auspices of the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, in which all the parties in Burundi should be involved.

It considers that this announcement represents an important stage in the search for negotiated solutions to the conflict in Burundi. It encourages the parties concerned to begin this process as soon as possible.

The European Union cautions them against any attempt to resort to force in order to impede the process of national reconciliation.

The European Union reiterates its concern about the humanitarian situation in the assembly camps and calls upon the regime of Burundi to dismantle the camps as speedily as possible.

The European Union recalls its statement of 7 May, in which it firmly condemned the continuation of the violence in the field and, in particular, the massacres and acts of extortion perpetrated against the civilian population. It urgently appeals to all of the armed groups to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities in order to halt the violence and create conditions for starting negotiations in an atmosphere of trust and tranquillity.

The European Union is prepared to promote the peace process by providing its assistance both at the political level and in terms of the concrete aid which would prove necessary for the process aimed at restoring democracy. To this end, it enlists its Special Envoy, Mr. Ajello, to support the efforts of the mediator, Mr. Julius Nyerere, in cooperation with the Special Representative of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, Mr. Sahnoun, and the other international observers.